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*The Speakers of the House of Commons, from the Earliest Times to the Present Day, with a Topographical Description of Westminster at Various Epochs, and a Brief Record of the Principal Constitutional Changes during Seven Centuries.* By ARTHUR IRWIN DASENT. (London and New York: John Lane Company. 1911. Pp. xl, 455.)

UNTIL the turn of the century no attempt had been made to trace the development of the office of Speaker of the House of Commons, although the office is nearly as old as that of the Lord Chancellor, and from some aspects quite as important besides being always more in the public eye. Two histories of the chair have been published since 1900. Mr. Dasent, exceptionally well qualified for such an undertaking by reason of his service as senior clerk in the House of Commons, adds a third, and students of English constitutional history are thereby indebted to him for an addition to the growing list of books on Parliament based on ample research. Mr. Dasent is in an environment that makes such research possible under congenial and helpful conditions, and the advantageous conditions under which he worked—at St. Stephen's, in the muniment room at Westminster Abbey, and at the Record Office—as well as the aid he received from Sir Courtenay Ilbert, clerk of the House of Commons, and other of his colleagues of the Commons staff, are frequently evident in his pages and duly acknowledged in his preface.

Manning's *Lives of the Speakers*, published in 1851, would seem to have suggested to Mr. Dasent the task to which he set himself—for it is the Parliamentary and extra-Parliamentary careers of speakers since 1295 that form his chief interest. But while the personal aspect is dominant, and while Mr. Dasent has traced the careers of one hundred and twenty-nine speakers and incidentally added much to English biography, his book has at least four other distinct values. It traces the connection which existed until 1547 between Parliament and Westminster Abbey, of which the only obvious survival to-day is the custom of opening the gate from Dean Yard into Great College Street on the first day of a new session. It identifies the various chambers at Westminster and at Blackfriars, in which the Commons have sat; and it embodies the fullest history of the palace of St. Stephen's that has yet found a place in any history of Parliament. It chronicles the constitutional developments that were contemporary with a speaker's tenure of the chair; and it also notes each evolution in the office of speaker until, half-way through the eighteenth century, in the speakership of Arthur Onslow, it had, except in a few details, reached the plane on which it stands to-day.

Mr. Dasent has thus worked to five distinct ends, and incidentally he has added to what has hitherto been known of the Rolls of Parliament and the Journals of the House of Commons. He has also supplemented what is already in print concerning the date when members of the two

political parties grouped themselves to the right and left of the speaker's chair. Wherever Mr. Dasent is concerned with the topography of the immediate neighborhood of St. Stephen's, and where he goes a little further afield to Soho and Blackfriars, he adds interest and value to his pages, notwithstanding occasional digressions into present architecture, which, in view of the rapidity with which the face of London is changing, may have lost their point long before *The Speakers of the House of Commons* ceases to be of value to readers and students. There are one hundred and two illustrations. Eighty of them are of speakers. Of the others a map of Westminster, as Speaker Onslow knew it in 1740, is likely to be the most serviceable to students of the history of England in the eighteenth century.

E. P.

*The Dawn of Modern England, being a History of the Reformation in England, 1509-1525.* By CARLOS B. LUMSDEN. (London: Longmans, Green, and Company. 1910. Pp. 303.)

No writing of history is ever final. Even though no new material comes to light, the emphasis in history changes and the interpretation has thus to be adjusted to an altered *Zeitgeist*. This readjustment is especially necessary for periods full of party strife. Few would maintain that the history of the French Revolution has yet been written on lines destined to prove permanent. This is equally true of the Protestant Reformation and any attempt to rewrite it should be welcomed. The spirit of the present day lays emphasis upon the social consequences of religious movements and takes slight account of dogma. We find in the volume under review, written from the Roman Catholic standpoint, this spirit much in evidence. There is almost nothing about the theology of the Reformation; the author has always in mind the social results of the great change.

It must be admitted that the tone of the book is not wholly admirable. The author tilts against the Protestant assailants of his church and shows them scant courtesy.

Their statements about the teaching of the Catholic Church are such that the veriest little Catholic child would be competent to teach them the truth—though to teach them courtesy and charity would be an impossible task to anyone. . . . Misrepresentation has ever been a favourite weapon of Protestant controversialists, whether they write under the guise of history or not (pp. 183, 214).

No doubt some Protestant writers have assumed too much. We are reminded here that the Bible was freely translated and circulated before the Reformation. Principal Lindsay, whose work is far removed in spirit from that of the present author, has described the large number of translations in use in Germany before Luther and it must be regarded as one of the mysteries of history that Luther should not have seen a complete copy of the Bible until he entered the convent at Erfurt. Mr.